

Nucleic acid complexes

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The present invention relates to the induction of interferon production in the cells of living organisms, including human beings. According to the invention, nucleic acid complexes, such as the polyriboinosinate and polycytidylate complex (rIn.rCn), are modified to yield unpaired bases (uracil or guanine) along the polycytidylate strand which render the complexes more readily hydrolyzable by nucleases present in living cells. The modified complexes retain their ability to stimulate interferon release by the cells but are rendered more vulnerable to destruction within the cells, the modified complexes being significantly less toxic than the original complexes. In addition, polyinosinate strand now has been prepared to contain 5-16% 2'-O-methyl inosinate residues, designated as (rI5-20,2'-MeI)n. The new complex (rI5-20,2'-MeI)n.rCn, exhibits 100-fold more activity than rIn.rCn as an interferon inducer in human cells.

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